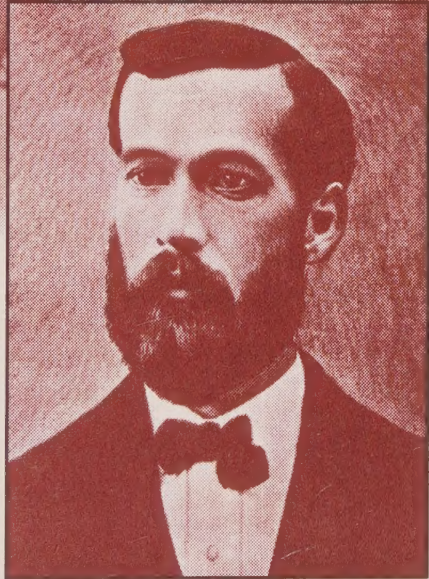
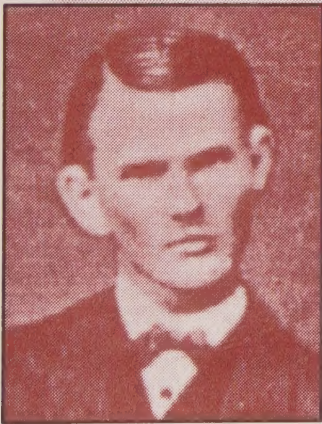


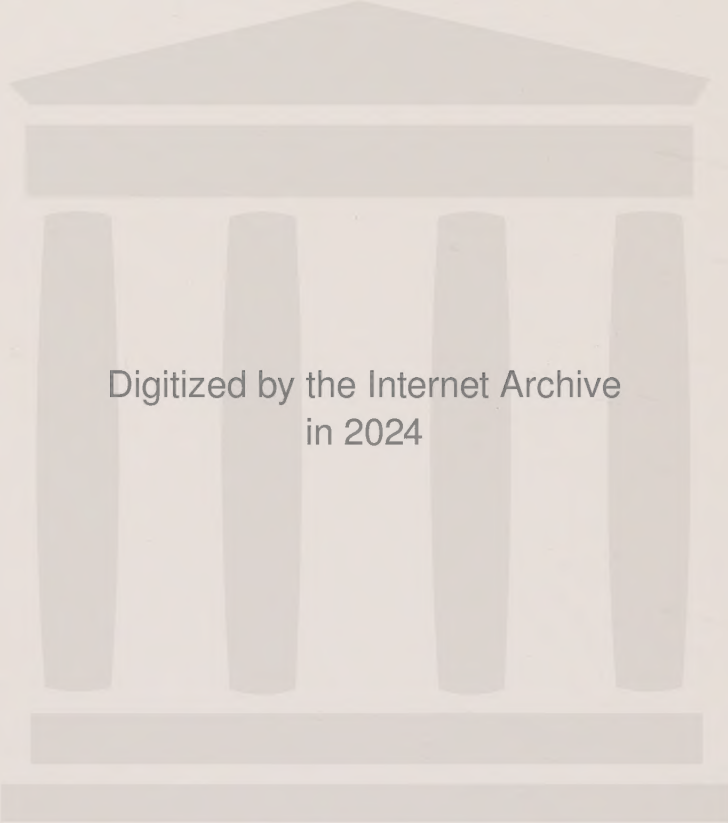
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THE NORTHFIELD BANK RAID

September 7, 1876



*Be true to your friends
of the Heavens fall
Col. Younger.*



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THE NORTHFIELD BANK RAID

A STORY OF THE HEROISM OF PIONEER
CITIZENS OF NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA,
WHO FRUSTRATED AN ATTEMPT BY THE
JAMES-YOUNGER GANG TO ROB THE FIRST
NATIONAL BANK OF NORTHFIELD ON
SEPTEMBER 7, 1876.

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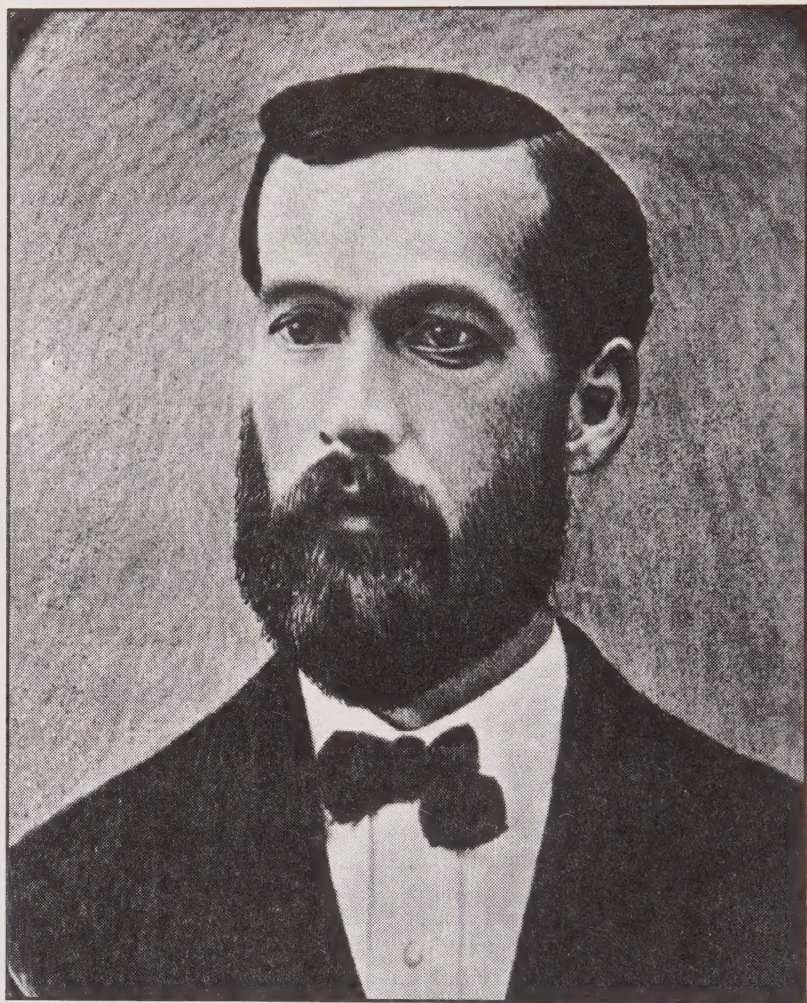
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PREFACE

The story of the Northfield Raid in which a notorious gang of bandits led by Jesse James met their Waterloo, not at the hands of armed officers of the law, but of quiet, ordinary, peace-loving citizens of a little college town, has been often told. Scarcely a day passes but visitors to Northfield ask about the historic event, want to know the location of the scene of the battle and in these very recent years, see the restored interior of the bank, a museum maintained by the Northfield Historical Society. Books have been written about the event, and it has filled many columns of newspaper space, not only in Northfield, but throughout the United States. Among all these, Professor George Huntington's accurately-written book, "Robber and Hero," published in 1895 by the Christian Way Publishing Company, remains probably the most authentic story of the raid. It is that source book which furnished most of the data for this account, corrections in a few details and additions having been made from other sources believed authentic.

ON THE COVER

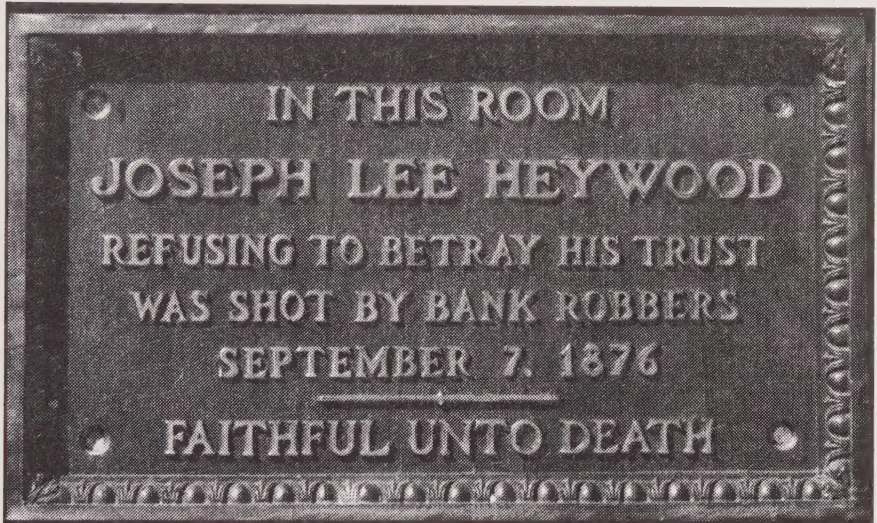
Jesse James, left, Joseph Lee Heywood, right. Background: Scene from the raid reenactment during the Defeat of Jesse James Days held in Northfield every September. Bottom: When the Youngers were to be tried the next day the County Sheriff went to Cole and asked him if he would tell who it was that shot Heywood and told him that it might be easier for him if he did. Cole replied that he would give his answer in the morning. The signed note he handed the sheriff the next day reads, "Be true to your friends if the Heavens fall, Cole Younger."



JOSEPH LEE HEYWOOD

JOSEPH LEE HEYWOOD was the hero of the Northfield Raid of September 7, 1876. He was thirty-nine years old when he fearlessly met death at the hands of armed bandits while defending his trust as an officer of the First National Bank. His memory has been cherished with peculiar reverence by the people of Northfield, especially by Carleton College of which he was an officer, and his character is admired wherever the story is known. The banks of the United States and Canada contributed to a fund of over

\$12,000 for the benefit of the family and as a tribute to his heroism. Carleton College founded the Heywood Library Fund in his honor, and has a memorial plaque bearing his name. A memorial window in the United Church of Christ of Northfield also bears his name and the inscription "Fidelitas."



**HEYWOOD MEMORIAL PLAQUE LOCATED AT THE
NORTHFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM IN THE
ORIGINAL LOCATION OF THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK**

I—NORTHFIELD INVADED

Late in the summer of 1876 a mysterious company of eight Missourians, all of them notorious bandits, moved upon Minnesota. The outfit, which had determined to raid and rob a bank, included Jesse James and his brother, Frank, Thomas C. Younger (commonly known as Cole Younger), and his brothers, James and Robert, Clel Miller, William Stiles (alias Bill Chadwell) and Charlie Pitts (alias George Wells). "In all-around outlaw efficiency this band probably never has been equaled in America or anywhere else," is the testimony of Jesse James' biographer.

The outlaws did not ride about the state in a single group. They were divided into scouting parties, and for a fortnight they traversed the roads of several counties, visiting such towns as Red Wing, St. Peter, Mankato, St. James, Janesville, Waterville and—Northfield.

Some believe that Mankato was the first selection as a place where they might raid a bank, but on that Monday, September 4, when the plans were ready for the attack on Mankato, the presence of a large number of citizens on the streets near the bank, who, unknown to the robbers, were only watching the progress of repair work on an adjoining building, twice deterred them from their purpose, and they abandoned Mankato. Bill Stiles, one of the gang, was a former resident of Rice County, and knew that at Northfield the First National Bank was a prosperous institution.

It is also thought that the raiders may have known of the presence in Northfield of General Adelbert Ames, former carpetbagger governor of Mississippi, and may have thought that his father-in-law, Civil War Union General Butler—despised in the South—had funds in the Northfield bank. The robbers now moved upon Northfield. Monday night found them in Janesville, eighteen miles east of Mankato; Tuesday night in Cordova; and Wednesday night at Millersburg, nine miles west of Northfield. Ten days before the attempt on the bank, two members of the band had visited Northfield for a survey, but nobody seems to have questioned their motives when they made inquiries about the bank and the lay of the land.

Early on the morning of Thursday, September 7, the various



WHERE THE RAID TOOK PLACE — BANK WAS LOCATED WHERE THREE ARCHES ARE, JUST LEFT OF CENTER OF THE PICTURE.

detachments of the band (they traveled in pairs and trios) met in the woods five miles west of town, and in the course of the forenoon some of them appeared on the streets and in the stores, and five of them ate their noon-day meal in a restaurant on the west side. All wore linen dusters, which served to conceal their weapons and cartridge belts.

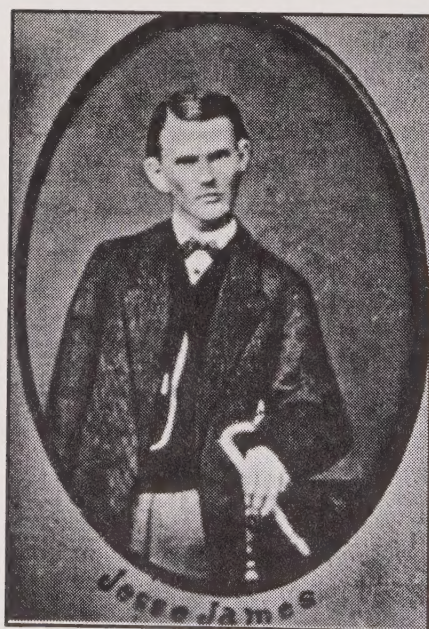
It was about two o'clock in the afternoon that the first trio, consisting of Pitts, Bob Younger and, it is believed, Jesse James, came over the bridge, and crossing Bridge Square, dismounted in front of the bank. They threw their bridle reins over some hitching posts, and then walked leisurely to the corner and sat down upon some drygoods boxes in front of Lee & Hitchcock's store, assuming an air of indifference. Soon two other horsemen, Cole Younger and Clel Miller, rode up Division Street from the south. Upon their approach the three men at the corner walked back to the door of the bank and went in. Thereupon Miller dismounted, and going to the bank closed the front door, while Younger dismounted in the middle of the street, and pretended to tighten his saddle girth. This action attracted the attention of several citizens.

J. S. Allen, a hardware merchant, whose store was located around

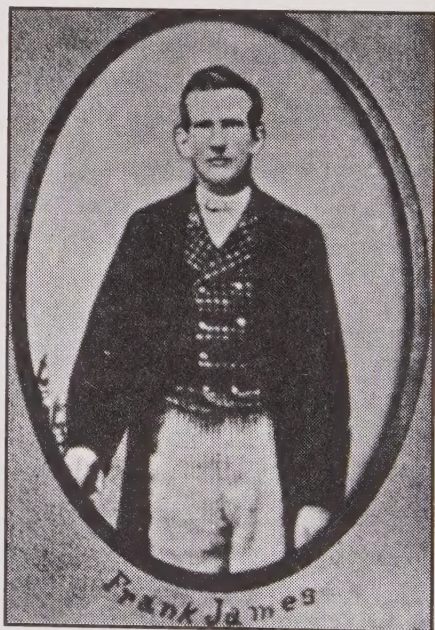
the corner west of the building which was occupied by the bank, attempted to follow the three men into the bank, but was instantly seized by Miller and ordered to stand back. Allen jerked away from the grasp of the robber and ran toward the store, around the corner, shouting, "Get your guns, boys. They are robbing the bank!"

About the same time, H. M. Wheeler, a young medical student at home on vacation from the University of Michigan, sitting in front of his father's drug store on the east side of the street, became suspicious and moved down the street opposite the bank. When he saw Allen's encounter with Miller, he shouted, "Robbery! Robbery!"

Upon his outcry, Miller and Younger sprang into their saddles and began riding up and down the street at the utmost speed of their horses. They were joined by the three men who had been left as a rear guard, who took up the same tactics. In this constant fusillade the first person was shot, Nicholas Gustavson, a Swede who did not understand English and remained on the streets after the robbers had ordered him away. He died four days later.



JESSE JAMES



FRANK JAMES

II—THE SCENE IN THE BANK

Meanwhile, a very different scene was enacted within the bank, where the first trio of robbers were dealing with a trio of bank employees, A. E. Bunker, teller, J. L. Heywood, bookkeeper, and F. J. Wilcox, assistant bookkeeper. Since the cashier, G. M. Phillips, was out of the state at the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia, Mr. Heywood was acting cashier.

When the three robbers entered the bank the employees were busy at their desks. Mr. Bunker immediately stepped to the counter, supposing they were customers, when three revolvers were pointed at him and he was ordered to throw up his hands. The three robbers then climbed over the counter and covered the other employees with their revolvers.

One of them said, "We're going to rob this bank. Don't any of you holler; we've got forty men outside."

Pointing his revolver at Heywood, he then asked him, "Are you the cashier?"

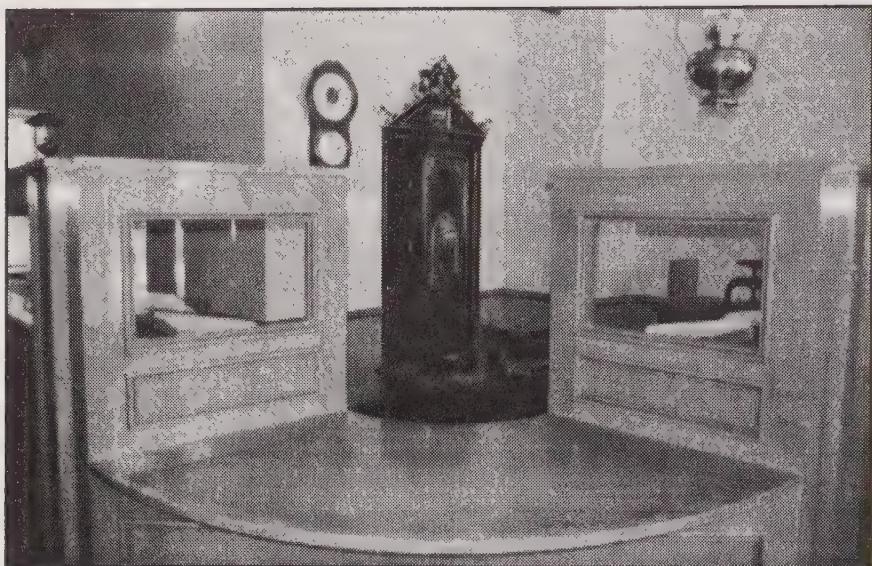
"I am not," replied Heywood. The same question was asked the other employees, each of them making the same reply.

The robber turned back to Heywood, who was sitting at the cashier's desk. "I know you're the cashier," he said angrily. "Now open up the safe damn quick or I'll blow your head off."

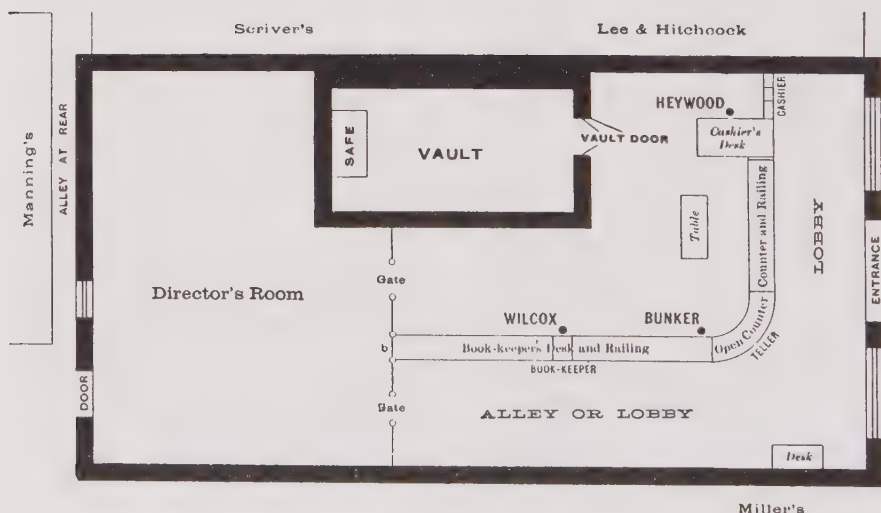
A second robber, Pitts, then ran to the vault and stepped inside. Heywood, ignoring the flourishing weapons of the robbers, arose and attempted to close the door. He was instantly dragged back and two of the robbers, thrusting their revolvers in his face said, "Open that safe now, or you haven't a minute to live."

"There is a time lock on," Heywood replied, "and it cannot be opened now."

The robbers then dragged Heywood roughly about the room, and realizing the desperate situation, he shouted, "Murder! Murder!," whereupon he was struck on the head with a revolver, and fell to the floor. The robbers still insisted that Heywood should open the safe, and occasionally turned from him to Bunker and Wilcox, calling upon them to unlock the safe. To these demands the young men answered that they could not unlock the safe. This was true as it was already unlocked; the door was closed, the bolts were shot into place, but the combination dial was not turned.



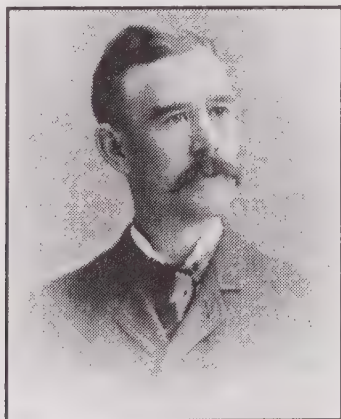
**THE BANK INTERIOR WHICH HAS NOW BEEN RESTORED AND
REPRODUCED AT THE ORIGINAL SITE.
THE VAULT DOOR IS AT THE CENTER OF THE PICTURE.**



ARCHITECT'S DRAWING OF BANK FLOOR PLAN

Finally, as a last resort to coerce Heywood, who was lying on the floor, Pitts placed his revolver close to Heywood's head and fired. This was the first shot fired in the bank, and the bullet passed into the vault, and through a tin box containing jewelry and papers left by a customer for safe keeping.

The special custodian of Bunker and Wilcox was Bob Younger, who compelled them both to get down on their knees under the counter. From this position Bunker made several attempts to extricate himself, and finally, when Younger's face was turned, dashed through the directors' room to the rear door of the bank and, throwing himself against the closed blinds which were fastened on the inside, succeeded in reaching an outside flight of stairs. His escape was noticed by Pitts, who fired at him, the ball whizzing past Bunker's ear. As he reached the rear entrance of the next building Pitts fired again, and Bunker was struck near the joint of the right shoulder, the missile coming out just below his collar bone. Pitts then gave up the chase, and, on returning to his companions heard one of them on the outside shout, "This game is up! Better get out boys; they are killing all our men." The three robbers in the bank, hearing this, rushed into the street. The last one (initially believed to have been Jesse James but suspicions are many years later aimed at Frank James) as he climbed over the counter, deliberately shot Heywood through the head as he was on his feet and was staggering towards his desk.



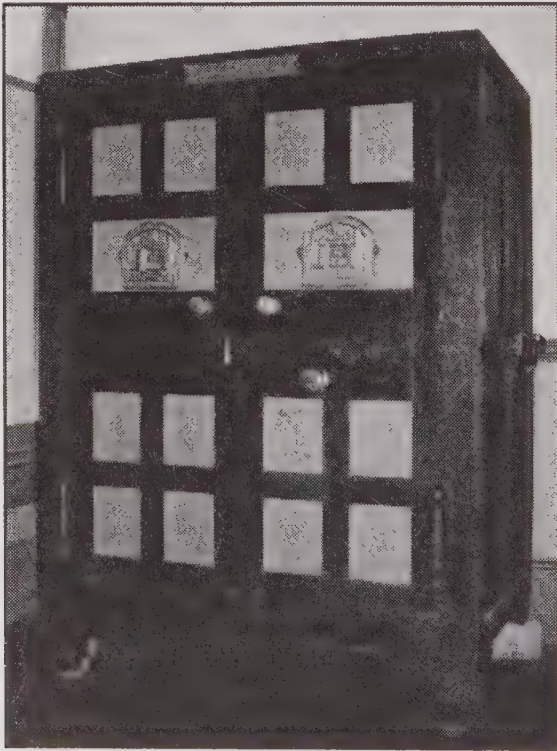
A. E. BUNKER



DR. H. M. WHEELER



A. R. MANNING



**THE SAFE IN WHICH THE SAVINGS OF
NORTHFIELDERS REPOSED AT THE
TIME OF THE RAID.**

III—THE BATTLE IN THE STREET

The conflict in the street was at its height. Dr. Wheeler had hastened to the Dampier Hotel when the citizens had been driven from the streets by the robbers, and securing an old army carbine had stationed himself at a second story chamber window. Meanwhile, Mr. Allen, who had first sounded the alarm, had proceeded to his hardware store and distributed guns and ammunition to his neighbors. A. R. Manning, the other hardware merchant, armed himself with a breech loading rifle. The people had deserted the streets, the stores and offices were hastily closed, and the five mounted robbers were riding back and forth, up one side of the street and down the other, doing their utmost with voice and arms to intensify the state of terror.

The scene of the actual conflict was that part of Division Street on which the bank faced, scarcely a full block in length. Capt. H. S. French, the postmaster, who had hastily locked his office, Justice Streater and Elias Hobbs started throwing rocks.

As Clel Miller was mounting his horse, Elias Stacy, who had been armed with a fowling piece by Allen, confronted him and fired at his head; the fine buckshot marked the robber's face, but inflicted no serious wound. Later in the battle, Ross C. Phillips, J.B. Hyde and James Gregg also did their best with similar weapons.

Manning and Wheeler were the ones who finally put the robbers to flight. Manning came running from his store, and stepping into the open street, saw over the backs of the horses the heads of the two robbers. Manning, lowering his gun, changed his aim and shot the nearest horse. He then dropped back, around the corner, and reloaded, and, returning, seeing Cole Younger between the horses and the bank door, fired, wounding him badly, but not fatally. Again Manning dropped back to reload, and looking cautiously around the corner, he saw Stiles sitting on his horse, some seventy or eighty yards away. Taking deliberate aim, he shot the brigand through the heart, and he fell dead from his saddle.

At the same time, Wheeler, from his vantage point in the second story of the hotel, fired his first shot at James Younger, who was riding by; the gun carrying high, the ball struck the ground beyond the brigand. His next shot was at Clel Miller, and the bullet passed



WOODCUT OF RAID

through his body, severing the sub-clavian artery and killing him instantly. It was at this time, when Cole Younger rode to the door of the bank, that the band mounted their horses, but there was no horse for Bob Younger, his steed having been killed by Manning. In the meantime, Manning and Wheeler had both reloaded, and as the former showed himself ready to renew the fight, Bob came running towards him down the sidewalk. Manning raised his rifle to shoot, while Younger drew his revolver. They both dodged, placing an outside stairway between them, and kept up a game of hide and seek. Wheeler, though he could but imperfectly see Younger's body from his position, took a shot at the brigand; the ball struck the robber's elbow, shattering the bone; he coolly changed his pistol to his left hand, and continued his efforts to shoot Manning.

While Wheeler was reloading his gun, and Manning changing his position, Bob Younger sprang from his hiding place, mounted behind his brother, Cole, and the entire band, or what was left of it, turned and fled.

The battle was over. From its opening to its close, it had occupied but seven minutes.

The funds of the bank were intact. Six of the robbers were in flight, and at least two of them badly wounded. In the front of the bank lay the dead horse; nearby was the body of Clel Miller, and a half block away, on the other side of the street, that of Stiles. In the bank was the dead body of Heywood.

The grief and indignation over the death of Mr. Heywood was intense. He was a man greatly respected in the community, was prominent in church and business life and at the time of his death was the city treasurer and also treasurer of Carleton College.

On Sunday, September 10, two funeral services were held in Northfield in his honor. One in the morning was held in the high school at which the Rev. D. L. Leonard, pastor of the Congregational church, preached the funeral sermon, and the other in the afternoon when services were conducted by James W. Strong, President of Carleton College. Mr. Heywood was buried in Northfield Cemetery.

While the excitement over the tragedy was at its height, and the inquests and the funeral services over the dead were in progress, the escaped robbers were not forgotten.

IV—FLEEING FROM NORTHFIELD

The robbers left Northfield by the Dundas road leading southwest. They rode abreast, taking the whole road, compelling everyone they met to take the ditch. They helped themselves to one of Philip Empey's span of gray horses, and "borrowed" a saddle from another farmer for the use of Bob Younger, whose wounded arm was causing him much suffering. About 4:30 p.m. the band reached Millersburg, where some of them had spent the previous night. Here they were recognized, but they were still in advance of the news of their crime, and far ahead of their pursuers.

The robbers were scarcely out of sight before the Northfield men were running for their guns and horses to join in the chase of the robbers. The State Capital was telegraphed for aid, and as soon as practicable a small army of pursuers was organized. Three times in the afternoon of the day of the robbery small advance detachments of the force nearly came upon the fugitives. First they were nearly overtaken while seizing a horse on the Dundas road. Again at Shieldsville, fifteen miles west of Northfield, a squad of Faribault men had arrived in advance of the pursued by taking a shorter road. They had, however, gone within doors, leaving their guns outside, when the robbers suddenly appeared before the door and held their unarmed pursuers in check while they watered their horses at an adjacent pump. On the departure of the robbers, the pursuers regained their guns, and being reinforced by a dozen local recruits, hastened after the robbers. The band was overtaken in a ravine four miles west of Shieldsville, where shots were exchanged at long range, without effect on either side, and the robbers escaped into the thick woods beyond.

In the meantime, a more systematic and effective company was organized. On the night of the robbery there were 200 citizens in the field; on the following day 500, and later the number had swelled to at least 1,000. Many of these, however, were a source of weakness to the force, their services being tendered solely from mercenary motives, as large rewards for the capture of the robbers were offered by the bank, the governor, and the railroad companies.

There were two objects to be accomplished: the retreat of the fugitives was to be cut off, and they were to be hunted down and

captured. To secure the first result, picket lines were thrown out in advance of them, covering every route which they could possibly take. To secure the second, scouting parties were put upon their trail, to follow them from place to place, and to explore the country in search of them. The robbers were in the vast forest and tract known as the "Big Woods." The brigands on the night of the robbery were left in a hiding place beyond Shieldsville. The following day they moved first westward, then southwestward, in the direction of Waterville. They forded the Cannon River, and disappeared in the forest beyond. They pushed on into the township of Elysian, in LeSueur County, camping that night between the village of Elysian and German Lake. On the following morning they abandoned their horses and continued their journey on foot.

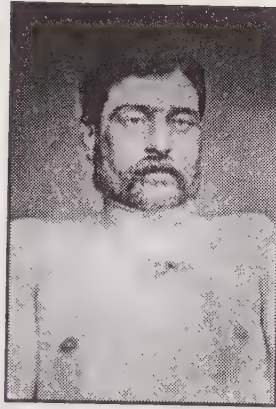
They went no farther that day than to find a hiding place on an island in the middle of a swamp, where they encamped for the remainder of the day. Continuing their journey after dark, they marched slowly all night in LeSueur County, and at daylight halted near the village of Marysburg. Passing around the village, they made a camp four miles south of it. Nine miles west of this camp, and within two or three miles of Mankato, they found a deserted farmhouse in the woods, and here they remained two days and nights, having advanced less than fifty miles in five days. Even at this very moderate rate they had outdistanced their pursuers, who, on Tuesday morning discovered their half-starved horses and the deserted camp they had left the preceding Saturday, and this was regarded as a sign of the hopelessness of the cause. Thereupon a large proportion of the pursuers returned to their homes.

On Wednesday morning, however, news was conveyed to Mankato of the appearance of the robbers near that city. A new campaign was organized, under the direction of Gen. E. M. Pope. Again patrols and searching parties were sent out, and every possible avenue of escape was guarded, night and day. Policemen and police officers came down from Minneapolis and St. Paul and took part in the hunt. But again the fugitives escaped. Part of them crossed the railroad bridge over the Blue Earth River near Mankato, while two, mounted on a stolen horse, passed the picket line near Lake Crystal, and were fired upon by a picket guard.

These two men were believed to be the James brothers, who were

both thrown from the horse when the guard fired, and the animal then cantered back to its owner's pasture. The pair escaped in the darkness, and continuing their flight, stole a span of gray horses, which they mounted bareback. This allowed them to make rapid progress, and they assumed the role of officers in pursuit of criminals. By traveling day and night, and taking a due west course, in two days they made eighty miles, and, on Sunday, September 17, they crossed the Minnesota line into Dakota. Here they made a prisoner of Dr. Sidney Moshier, Sr., a Sioux City, Iowa, physician, from whom they obtained medical and surgical aid for the wounds of Frank James, whose left leg had been badly injured at Northfield, and with whom they exchanged clothes. Pursuing their course through southeastern Dakota, they crossed the Missouri River at Springfield, and went as far south and west as Columbus, Nebraska. At this point they sold their horses, took the cars for Omaha, and made their way back to their old home in Clay County, Missouri. Rumors were circulated that they were en route to Texas, and officers were sent to that state to arrest them. However, after a short time at their former home, they went to Tennessee where they lived in retirement for a short time. They later returned to Missouri where Jesse was killed in 1882, but Frank was tried and acquitted for various crimes and survived his brother by many years.

The disappointment and mortification of the pursuers was intense; a thousand men had failed to capture six. The campaign had proved an utter failure, and the "robber hunt" was the great joke of the season.



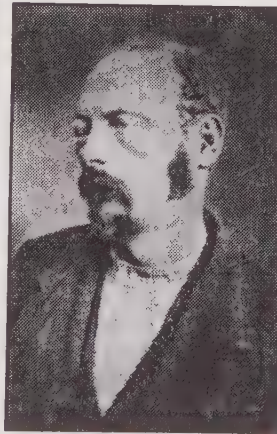
CHARLIE PITTS



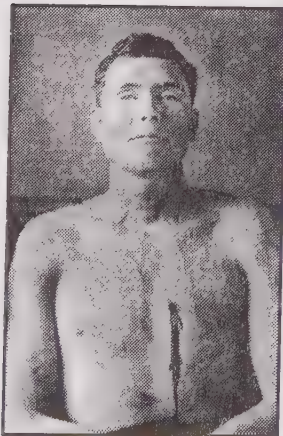
BOB YOUNGER



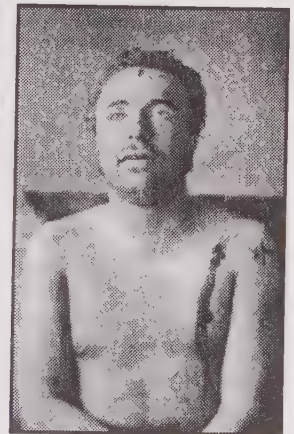
JIM YOUNGER



COLE YOUNGER



WILLIAM STILES



CLEL MILLER

THE SIX BANDITS KILLED OR CAPTURED



CAPTORS OF THE YOUNGER BROTHERS NEAR MADEIRA

Upper row, left to right – Capt. W. W. Murphy, Benjamin Rice, Charles A. Pomeroy.

Lower Row, left to right – Sheriff James Glispin, George Bradford, T. L. Vought, James Serverson

V—CAPTURE AT MADELIA

It was supposed that the entire band had escaped from the state when, on September 21, news was received that four of them had been located in the neighborhood of Madelia.

The news of the presence of the band in the state was brought to Madelia by A. O. Sorbel, a Norwegian lad, about seventeen years old, who had been accosted on the morning of September 1 by two strange men, whom he believed to be the robbers. Riding rapidly to Madelia, seven or eight miles away, he alarmed the citizens, seven of whom, including James Glispin, the sheriff of Watonwan County, lost no time in reaching the refuge of the robbers. Fearing reprisals from other members of the bandit gang, Sorbel's name was given as "Oscar Oleson Suborn" in all published accounts of the capture at Madelia, but this was a fictitious name. Not until a half century after the event did it become generally known that it was Mr. Sorbel, then living at Webster, South Dakota, who was the "Paul Revere" of this episode of Minnesota history.

The band of fugitives was soon discovered making their way on foot through what is known as Hanska slough, connected with Lake Hanska, or Long Lake. They crossed the lake and made several unsuccessful attempts to obtain horses.

The robbers were at last hemmed in a rude triangle of ground, some five acres in extent, covered with an impenetrable growth of willow, box elders, wild plums and grapevines lying between the Watonwan River and along a steep bluff. They were driven to cover in these thickets, and a strong picket line surrounded them. Captain W. W. Murphy then asked for volunteers to go into the brush and rout out the bandits. Six men responded to his call, namely: Sheriff James Glispin, Col. Thomas L. Vought, Benj. M. Rice, George A. Bradford, Charles C. Pomeroy and James Severson. The captain formed his men into line five paces apart, and ordered the men to advance rapidly. They advanced some fifty or sixty yards, when the robbers were discovered, and one of them firing gave signal for a general fusillade on both sides. The two forces were not more than thirty feet apart; the fight was sharp and brief. Bradford and Severson were grazed by bullets, while Captain Murphy was struck in the side; the ball glanced on a briar root pipe in his pocket and lodged in his pistol belt. The robbers suf-

fered severely. Bob Younger was wounded in the chest; his brother James had five wounds; Cole had eleven, and Pitts was killed, having been hit five times. On being called upon to surrender, Bob Younger responded, "I surrender; they are all down but me."

On September 23 the prisoners were delivered to Sheriff Ara Barton, of Rice County, and taken to the county jail at Faribault, to await indictment and arraignment for their crimes. They were strongly guarded by a force of picked men, armed with state muskets, to prevent a possible lynching. On the night of October 2 an excited guard shot and killed a town policeman, who was approaching the jail. The unfortunate officer's name was Henry Kapanick, and he was indirectly the third victim of the raid of the Missouri bandits.

On November 9, the Youngers were arraigned in the Rice County district court. Four indictments had been found against the prisoners by the grand jury. The first charged them with being accessories to the murder of Heywood, the second with attacking Bunker with deadly weapons, the third with robbing the First National Bank, and the fourth charging Cole Younger as principal, and his brothers as accessories, with the murder of Gustavson. To these indictments they pleaded guilty, and were sentenced to the state penitentiary for life, the state laws being that if a murderer pleaded guilty, capital punishment could not be inflicted upon him.

Bob died in prison September 16, 1889. Many attempts were made to secure pardons for the others, who were regarded as model prisoners, but no governor would issue the pardon. Finally in 1901 the state Legislature enacted, practically for their sole benefit, a law providing that life convicts might be released from imprisonment when they had served thirty-five years, less the time allowed by law for good conduct. The passage of this law was stoutly resisted by Representative A. B. Kelly of Northfield who had the strong backing of his constituents.

On July 14, 1901, the Youngers were released from prison on parole, with certain conditions: They could not leave the state; they were not allowed to appear in any part or feature of a public show or exhibition of any character. They went to the Twin Cities, and for some time were in regular employment as salesmen. James Younger, during his parole, committed suicide in the Reardon

Hotel, St. Paul, because the board of pardons would not allow him to marry.

The board of pardons on February 4, 1903, granted Cole Younger a pardon on condition that he should leave the state and never return, and that he would promise never to appear on the stage or exhibit himself or capitalize his notoriety. He went to his old home in Missouri, and later engaged with his old partner, Frank James, in the conduct of a "Wild West" show which exhibited throughout several states. He died March 21, 1916.

Cole Younger's Handwriting

Below is the concluding paragraph, in Cole Younger's own handwriting, of his statement of the Northfield robbery, made in 1897 in one of the Youngers' appeals for pardon.

I will leave it to Sheriff Barton and the wardens of the institutions to speak of us during the past twenty years. I have often met Captain Yates, and also most of the men several times that were directly concerned in our capture. They have been most kind in word and feeling toward us, and since our capture we have never felt toward them any other feeling but that of friendship. The above is a true statement in so far as I can speak from personal knowledge; What occurred in the bank I can speak of only as it was told to me. Cole Younger, Stillwater Minn
1897

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Cole Younger, Stillwater Minn 1897

VI—WAS JESSE JAMES IN NORTHFIELD?

Were Jesse James, the most notorious bandit and bank robber of his day, and his brother, Frank James, in the raid in Northfield? That is a question which has agitated those who had been interested in the sanguinary end of the gang which came to Minnesota. Most of the early writers upon the subject of the Northfield bank raid, including Professor Huntington, insist that they were.

An autobiography written by Cole Younger in 1903 contains the information that the James boys were not members of the band which took part in the Northfield raid. "Every blood-and-thunder history of the Younger brothers declares that Frank and Jesse James were the two members of the band that entered Northfield who escaped arrest or death," he wrote. "They were not, however. One of these two men was killed afterwards in Arizona and the other died from fever some years afterward. There were reasons why the James and the Younger brothers could not take part in any such project as that at Northfield." These reasons, he goes on to explain, were differences that arose between them, and he adds, "Jesse and I were not on friendly terms at any time after the Shepherd affair!"

What may be accepted as a final statement on the subject is that of Jesse James' biographer, Robertus Love. In his biography, "The Rise and Fall of Jesse James," published in 1926 by G. P. Putnam's Sons, Mr. Love says, in referring to the two who escaped after the robbery at Northfield, "Nobody knows to this day, nor will anybody ever know absolutely, that those men were the Jameses. We must fall back upon the law of probabilities, which in this instance indicates most strongly that they were Jesse and Frank. Subsequent events bolster the belief."

Research conducted in very recent years including that in South Dakota where the physician was captured, once again points to the presence of the James Brothers in Northfield. It is generally accepted in Clay County, Missouri, that they were here and the bullet recovered in 1979 from Jesse's original grave has been traced by Missouri historians to the Northfield foray. The bullet, lodged in his leg, caused him to be lame the rest of his life.

VII—THE LESSON ENDURES

An editorial reprinted from the Northfield News of September 10, 1926

The fiftieth anniversary of the famous raid of the James-Younger gang of robbers on the First National Bank of Northfield, an event which brought to a close the murderous careers of some of the most notorious bandits in the history of the frontier in that unsettled decade after the Civil War, is made the occasion of re-telling the story that has occupied so much space in the public prints. In a day when robbing of banks and crimes of violence are virtually every day occurrences, it may be a source of wonder to some that this story continues to hold interest.

But there is a reason why it endures. It is the same aspect of the event that caught the imagination of a nation and brought fame to Northfield fifty years ago that now gives it its lasting quality. In the preface of his admirable book, "Robber and Hero," Professor George Huntington put it in these words:

"Accounts of bank-robberies and other exploits of outlaws and desperadoes are usually supposed to belong to the criminal-news columns of the daily paper and to the writer of sensational literature. When the robber is the only or the principal actor in the scene, and his prowess or brutality the only feature worth mentioning, the less said of it the better. But when a great crime is the occasion of great heroism, courage, fidelity, intrepid resistance and the triumph of virtue over violence, then there is a story worth telling, and a lesson worth learning."

When circumstances arose in Northfield necessitating the utmost fidelity, courage and quick-thinking, the ordinary towns men of a quiet Minnesota community were found ready-made for heroic stature. Quiet, cultured Joseph Lee Heywood chose death rather than betray his trust to the institution employing him and the public it served. It never occurred to young collegian Wheeler or merchants Manning and Allen and their comrades that stopping the robbers was somebody else's business. They made it theirs—with telling results. And the captors at Madelia—not to mention countless other ordinary folks who did their share on the side of good citizenship—did not stop to weigh the fine points of duty, but in support of the common interest faced death to bring to justice those who had plundered and murdered their neighbors.

Mankind has always extolled those heroic souls who have waived their own rights in meeting a common danger. The lesson of the deeds of such men as these citizens of half a century ago—the fast-disappearing race of pioneers—was never more potent than today when indifference, selfishness, and a lack of common interest predominate in most of the relationships of life.



**BRIDGE SQUARE FROM THE WEST SHOWING FORMER BRIDGE OVER CANNON RIVER IN
THE FOREGROUND**

VIII—HISTORICAL SKETCH OF NORTHFIELD

It was in January, 1855, that a young man who had come west to seek health in the then territory of Minnesota, was on his way from St. Anthony Falls to the settlement of Faribault, where he had acquired a quarter interest in the town site. While on the way he chanced to visit a point on the Cannon River fourteen miles north of his destination. So impressed was he with the beauty of the valley and the waterpower resources of the river as a site for a mill that he took measures almost immediately to secure the location, and a few months later purchased from three original pre-emptors 320 acres of land upon which, in the fall of 1855, he surveyed and platted a town. He did not at first contemplate starting a town, much less a city, although settlers were at that time coming in increasing numbers to Southern Minnesota. He thought only of a mill. There was then no road running through the place, but he had one laid out from a point the earliest settlers called Waterford, three miles below the saw mill and the flour mill he had built on the Cannon River banks. He then thought of a post office, a schoolhouse, a blacksmith shop, a store, the town site, and finally a railroad, and by energetic work got them all. By the time Minnesota was admitted to the Union as a state in 1858, the thriving little hamlet laid out on the banks of the Cannon River three years before had become permanent on the map of Minnesota.

The man was John W. North, lawyer, anti-slavery lecturer, temperance advocate, and believer in women's suffrage. The place which he founded is Northfield, now enjoying nationwide fame as the seat of two colleges, Carleton and St. Olaf, the home of the world-renowned St. Olaf Lutheran Choir, and as the home of industries such as Sheldahl, Ryt-Way Packaging, Fairway Foods and Malt-O-Meal.

Northfield's founder was a man who left his mark on the history of the state, not only in the founding of a city in Southern Minnesota, but whose influence was felt in the affairs of the territory and of the new state, and in fact, of four states. As a member of the territorial legislature he wrote the act which became the charter of the University of Minnesota, and he served as secretary of the board of regents from 1851 to 1860. He presided over the Republi-

can wing of the constitutional convention of 1857 when the state constitution was framed. Three years later he headed the Minnesota delegation to the Republican convention in Chicago at which Abraham Lincoln was nominated. From 1855 to 1861, Mr. North was active in the building of Northfield, but in the latter year he was appointed by President Lincoln as surveyor general of the new territory of Nevada, and subsequently presided over the state convention which drafted the constitution of that state, and was one of the judges of its supreme court. Four years later he went to Tennessee and was again active in public affairs. Early in 1870 he conceived the idea of establishing a colony of eastern people in southern California and began the development of the plan which resulted in the settlement of Riverside and led to that of Pasadena and other cities of that region. He also served as judge of the United States Courts of California prior to his death at Fresno in 1890.

Mr. North left an unmistakable impression upon the town which bears his name, although his actual connection with the community lasted but six years. He not only built its first mills, laid out the townsite and obtained a road, but he constructed the first house, erected a schoolhouse which served as a community center as well as a school, gave the city its park, established the first public reading room, and in 1857 built "The American House," a three-story hotel, which later became the first home of Carleton College. He attracted men and women to the new settlement who were interested in establishing here an "intelligent, temperate, religious society," to quote one of them.

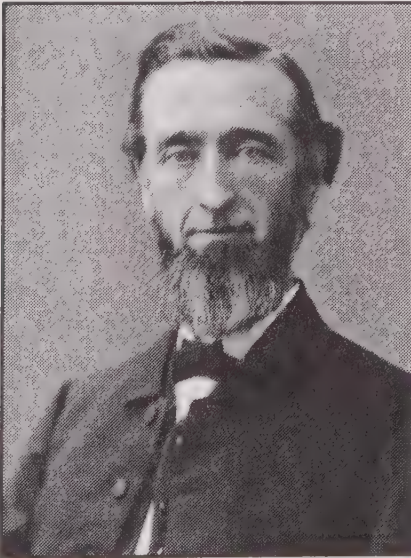
Northfielders of an early day—most of them New Englanders—were a cultured group. The Northfield Lyceum held its first meeting in the schoolhouse on October 1, 1856, scarcely a year after the town was laid out. Mr. North was the first president of this virile debating society. Thomas S. Buckham, later a resident of Fari-bault and for twenty-eight years judge of the district court of Rice County, was vice president. Hiram Scriver, Northfield's first merchant, who settled here in June, 1856; S. P. Stewart, later the first president of the village council when the village of Northfield was incorporated in 1871; and Miron W. Skinner, pioneer merchant who became mayor of the city and trustee of Carleton College, and in whose memory Skinner Memorial Chapel was erected on the



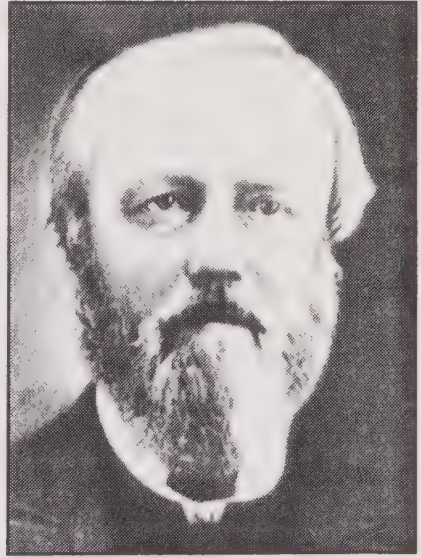
JOHN W. NORTH,
Founder of Northfield,
1855



HIRAM SCRIVER,
Northfield's First Merchant,
1856



DR. J. W. STRONG,
First President of
Carleton College



THE REV. B. J. MUUS,
Founder of
St. Olaf College

Carleton campus—these were others identified with this society.

It was not surprising that in such an atmosphere were men and women eager not only to build public schools and churches, but anxious to attract a “Christian College” to this little settlement. Many are the stories told of the sacrifices that were made by the citizens of the village to raise money and obtain a site to offer for such a college. Thus it came about that in 1866, only eleven years after the town was founded and only a year after the first railroad train arrived from Minneapolis on the lines of the old Minnesota Central, the Association of Congregational Churches in Minnesota voted to establish a college at Northfield, to be known as Northfield College, a name which was changed to Carleton College in 1877 when William Carleton of Charlestown, Mass., gave it the first large gift, \$50,000. On September 25, 1867, the “college” opened with twenty-three students and Horace Goodhue, stalwart young Dartmouth alumnus, as the sole instructor. The town at that time had a population of about 1,500. On June 29, 1867, the cornerstone of Willis Hall was laid, and on October 4, 1870, the Rev. James W. Strong was inaugurated as the first president, a position he held for thirty-four years.

In 1867, due to the enterprise of Professor W. W. Payne, plans were laid for building a small astronomical observatory on the campus, and this was completed in 1878. On October 23 of that year the first electric time signals ever given west of the Mississippi River and north of St. Louis were sent to the Milwaukee railroad from the Carleton observatory.

Today Carleton’s magnificent campus and buildings represent one of the finest college plants in the west. Along the Cannon River for two miles below Northfield is the arboretum, preserving the virgin beauty which the first settlers found when they came to this valley.

On November 6, 1874, articles of incorporation for “St. Olaf’s School” were signed in Northfield by five men, headed by the Rev. B. J. Muus, pioneer Norwegian Lutheran missionary pastor in Southern Minnesota, and Harald Thorson, another early Northfield businessman, who was a generous benefactor of St. Olaf, and when he died left the institution the bulk of his estate valued then at a million dollars. In December the incorporators purchased the

old public school building, and there St. Olaf's School was opened January 8, 1875. Later the present beautiful campus, overlooking the city from an eminence known as Manitou Heights, was chosen. On July 4, 1877, the cornerstone of "Old Main" was laid. In 1878 the school moved to its new home under the leadership of its first president, the Rev. T. N. Mohn.

Northfield was as generous in its welcome to the new college as it had been to Carleton in the decade previous. St. Olaf brought new citizens of Norwegian extraction to the community. It is to the St. Olaf Lutheran Choir and to Dr. F. Melius Christiansen, the genius who developed it, that modern Northfield is also greatly indebted for making the name of this little city known to millions of people in the United States and Europe by its concert tours.

The year 1876 is significant in Northfield history since it provides the one glamorous and adventurous event in the more or less sedate and quiet character of the history of this little college town and its people. It was on September 7 of that year that the citizens of Northfield routed, in a seven-minute battle, the notorious James-Younger gang of robbers who had attempted to hold up the First National Bank. This bank is today Northfield's oldest business establishment, having been founded in 1872. The Northfield News, established in the historic year of the bank raid—1876—is Northfield's second oldest business institution.

Northfield was destined to receive two institutions besides the colleges. In 1893 the present site of the Minnesota Odd Fellows Home, donated by the citizens of Northfield, was accepted by the Home corporation and the state home of the Order established here. The same year the Laura Baker School was opened.

No history of Northfield is complete without reference to the agricultural resources of the surrounding community. Milling was the first important industry in this region, the industry which, in fact, was responsible for the beginning of the settlement here. Between the cities of Northfield and Faribault in Rice County, a distance of twenty-three miles along the Cannon River, lie the sites of sixteen mills, silent testimony of an industrial activity that at one time was the pride of the valley of the Cannon. As a more diversified agriculture replaced wheat farming in this region, Northfield became known at a later period as a center of purebred

horses. Real agricultural prosperity came to stay, however, with the introduction of dairying and the breeding of Holsteins at the turn of the century. It was in Northfield on March 4, 1903, that the first local Holstein Breeders Club in America was formed. Later there were several hundred breeders and thousands of purebred Holstein cattle in this region.

Like the people of the town, the settlers of the countryside were men and women of character. Those who came after them early learned to cooperate. Thus, in this region was formed one of the first farmers' clubs, and cooperative organizations were established early.

Several industries have been located in Northfield through the years, often types that required highly skilled craftsmanship and engineering.

The history of Northfield is not a record of stirring and sensational events such as once belonged to more glamorous frontiers. There was neither precious gold nor adventure, as such, to be found in the quiet valley of the Cannon River to bring pioneering men and women to this spot. The adventure of building a new community like those left behind in the East was the glorious adventure to those New Englanders of the 1850's and '60's, and character and citizenship was the standard by which they judged each newcomer. Today's Northfield of more than* 15,000 people (including some 4,600 students at its two liberal arts colleges) still holds high the ideals of building a healthy, thriving, happy community.

*Estimated by the city of Northfield in early 1995 at 15,143 (1990 census, 14,684). The actual college population for 1995, Carleton, 1,750; St. Olaf, 2,850.

Graphic credits (cover, Jesse James, J.L. Heywood, Cole Younger's writing, Northfield Historical Society, Raid Reenactment, Northfield News photo; p. 4, J.L. Heywood, N.H.S.; p. 5, Heywood Memorial Plaque, N.H.S.; p. 7, Where the Raid Took Place, N.H.S.; p. 8, Jesse and Frank James, N.H.S.; Bank Interior, Northfield News photo, Architect's Drawing, N.H.S.; p. 11, A.E. Bunker, N.H.S.; p. 12, Wheeler and Manning, N.H.S., Safe, Northfield News Photo; p. 14, Woodcut of Raid, N.H.S.; p. 19, Six Bandits, N.H.S.; p. 20, Captors, N.H.S.; p. 23, Cole Younger's Handwriting, N.H.S.; p. 26, View of Bridge Square, N.H.S.; p. 29, North and Scriver, N.H.S., Strong, Carleton College Archives, Muus, St. Olaf College Archives.

